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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [MNUC](#) [SZ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: BILATERAL DIALOGUE WITH IRAN REGARDING HIKERS?

REF: A. 17 DEC 09 BIRSNER-MARWAHA/WALKER E-MAIL
[1](#)B. 04 JAN 10 DCM CARTER-MARWAHA E-MAIL
[1](#)C. BERN 0009

Classified By: DCM Leigh G. Carter; reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S) On January 2, 29 and 30, DCM Carter met with Swiss State Secretary Ambuehl and Swiss AMB to Iran Leu, who passed information detailing Swiss conversations with Iranian FM Mottaki on the margins of the World Economic Forum (WEF), in Davos, Switzerland, during which Swiss FM Calmy-Rey and Mottaki discussed the possibility of Switzerland conducting shuttle diplomacy to improve the resolution of pending consular cases on both sides. These discussions continued the theme initially proposed in Ref A and were amplified during Ambuehl's recent meetings in Tehran on January 23.

[1](#)2. (S) The Swiss have observed to the Iranians that the "top-down approach" on issues of concern has not worked and asked "why don't you try a bottom-up approach, starting with consular issues." Mottaki had asked Ambuehl in Tehran what concrete proposals Ambuehl had to offer. Ambuehl said he was clear that he had no specific mandate but some proposals to resolve outstanding consular cases and help to develop a new operational structure to resolve future cases. Both Ambuehl and Swiss FM Calmy-Rey emphasized in their meetings with the Iranian delegation their believe that focusing on a basic humanitarian area of concern to both countries would be beneficial to Iran and might help them enter into a more comprehensive approach to the US-Iranian bilateral relationship.

[1](#)3. (S) Calmy-Rey stated she was exploring possibilities with the Iranians without Washington's approval and sought reaction from Mottaki on proceeding. Mottaki reportedly said "why not?" When pressed for concrete suggestions from his side, he offered "the Americans should stop being hostile." Calmy-Rey promised to present this to the USG but warned Mottaki that she was unlikely to get feedback from the ministerial level in the short-term.

[1](#)4. (S) Within hours, the GoS requested a second meeting with DCM Carter for January 30. Ambuehl and Leu reported during the second meeting that Mottaki was informed a US ministerial reaction was still pending. Mottaki reiterated the Swiss could continue shuttling between sides in an effort to create a structure to solve Consular cases under the condition that the US was interested. His precise words were to the Swiss Foreign Minister "do what you can."

[1](#)5. (S) Cases of particular interest to Iran continue to be the Ardebili case, the pending extradition case of former Iranian Ambassador to the UK Tajik, the Iranian physicist who disappeared in Mecca, and their request for assistance concerning the Iran Royal Association and Tondar Commandos who may have been involved in the recent assassination of the physics professor in Iran (per diplomatic note passed to Ambassador Leu on January 26 through SPP). The Iranian

delegation also raised the issue of consular access through the Pakistani Embassy in Washington -- they allege that in the past, local Iranian staff were allowed to make consular visits and now they are banned from such practice.

16. (S) The Swiss believe that a unilateral gesture of good will in any one of these cases on our part will help break the deadlock we face with the hikers. The Iranian perspective is that they made the first move in the case of the Erbil five and we did not move quickly enough to reciprocate. The Swiss claim that they reminded the Iranians that consular cases must be considered independently of any other issues, especially the possibility of new sanctions. Mottaki said that he understood and accepted this.

17. (S) In the final meeting with the Swiss on January 29, Mottaki made a proposal on a separate issue which is the subject of a second cable we are transmitting.

CARTER